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THE AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION, PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

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Presidential Address read at the opening General Session of the Fiftieth Annual Meeting, American Public Health Association, New York City, November 14, 1921.

Of the altruistic instincts veneration is not the most highly developed at the present day; but I hold strongly with the statement that it is a sign of a dry age when the great men of the past are held in light esteem. (Osler.)

IT seems most fitting that on this, the fiftieth anniversary meeting of the American Public Health Association, we should pause to pay homage to the lives and accomplishments of those who guided the course of our Association in its early years and won for it the proud place it now occupies as an instrument for public good. We may well review our work and take stock of our achievements in an earnest effort to determine how far we have justified our existence and attained our ideals.

The Association "had its origin in that natural desire which thinkers and workers in the same fields, whether of business or philanthropy, or the administration of civil trusts, have for mutual counsel, advice and coöperation." (Smith.)

A preliminary meeting, attended by Doctors E. M. Snow, Providence, R. I., Chairman; J. H. Rauch, Chicago, Ill.; J. Ordronaux, Roslyn, N. Y.; Stephen Smith, New York City; E. H. Jones, New York City; C. C. Cox, Washington, D. C., and Carl Pfeiffer, New York City, architect, was held April 18, 1872, at 301 Mott St., New York, at which an informal discussion on the formation of a national sanitary association took place. A larger and more formal gathering was decided upon, and on the evening of the same day, these gentlemen, with the exception of Dr. Snow, and the addition of Doctors Elisha Harris and Moreau Morris, New York City, and Heber Smith of the Marine Hospital Service, met at the New York Hotel. At this meeting a Committee on Permanent Organization was appointed with Dr. Stephen Smith as chairman. This committee issued a call for the first regular meeting held at Long Branch, New Jersey, September 12, 1872, at which time a constitution was adopted, and Dr. Stephen Smith elected the first president.

Up to this time no public-health organization existed on the American continent, and public-health practice, in so far as it existed at all, was empirical and lacked uniformity.

In his classic address before the International Medical Congress in 1876, Dr. Henry I. Bowditch states that National Sanitary Conventions, so called, were held in Philadelphia, 1857, Baltimore, 1858, New York, 1859, and in Boston,

1860, but ceased with the outbreak of the Civil War.

Only three states, Massachusetts, 1869, California and Virginia, 1871, and the District of Columbia, 1870, had established boards of health prior to 1872, and only twelve up to 1876, the date of Dr. Bowditch's survey. In only two states was registration of births, deaths, and marriages claimed to be made with any degree of accuracy, though twenty had passed some laws concerning registration. In 1873, 134 cities in the United States had some form of health board.

In England three epidemics of cholera in 1831, 1849 and 1854, had brought the appointment of commissions of investigation. In 1848, following the report of a royal commission appointed to investigate outbreaks of disease in large towns, and to recommend measures for the improvement of the public health, comprehensive sanitary acts were adopted, a general board of health was established and medical officers of health were appointed.

In 1869 the famous Royal Sanitary Commission was appointed, and proposed for the first time a ministry of health, which failed to carry, but the Local Government Board was created in 1871. An epidemic of Asiatic cholera in 1832 resulted in a Provincial Act for the Appointment of Local Boards of Health, and in 1849 this act was amended to provide for a central board of health, to continue during the pleasure of the legislature.

In America, though we had not advanced so far, the leaven was working, and in 1850 there was published the "Report on the Sanitary Condition of Massachusetts," written largely, if not wholly, by a layman, Lemuel Shattuck. It was a remarkable paper which suggested the appointment of a state board of health, and so well outlined the duties and functions of such a board that when the board was finally appointed in 1869, the secretary, Dr. Derby, found in the pages written twenty years before, his inspiration and support. In 1870 Dr. Derby wrote the first paper ever published in this country under the direction of a permanent body appointed by state authority for the investigation of diseases and instruction of the public concerning them.

Such was the condition of things in the English-speaking countries when our Association was born.

In France, Pasteur was revolutionizing all former conceptions of disease by his discoveries, and the formulation of new theories.

In August and December, 1857, Pasteur published his first papers on lactic acid fermentation and alcoholic fermentation, showing that fermentation was caused by living organisms.

Discussions on spontaneous generation followed and persisted for several years. The proofs against it given by Pasteur settled the dispute for all time.

In 1865 he took up the study of silkworm disease, and soon brought it under control by methods based on his new discoveries, his experiments adding much to the knowledge already gained, and confirming the theories advanced.

In England, Lister, a surgeon, began in 1867 to put into practice the ideas he had gained as a student of Pasteur, and was able to report in 1869 that of forty patients who had suffered amputations, thirty-four had survived. Such good results were unheard of at that time, and were attributed by him entirely to antiseptic surgery, which was the practical application of Pasteur's theories to surgical practice.

In 1870-72 Pasteur pursued his studies on the fermentation of beer, and invented what is now called "Pasteurization," to correct unhealthy fermentations.

No more opportune time could have been chosen for the formation of our Association. The art of medicine was becoming the science of medicine, and modern preventive medicine was being born. The discoveries of Pasteur put an end to superstition and empiricism and substituted the bed-rock of science

as a foundation on which has been erected the wonderful structure of medicine as it exists to-day.

Although begun and apparently designed largely as an association of administrative officers, it was inevitable that others should be attracted to the ranks. The science of bacteriology had come into existence as a result of Pasteur's work, and the laboratory soon became a prime factor in the study and prevention of disease. The germ of anthrax had been seen by Rayer and Davaine in 1850; Delafond, 1860, had shown its power of vegetation, and Davaine, 1863, its causative relation to the disease, while Koch, 1876, obtained pure cultures on artificial media and demonstrated the spores. Pasteur completed the demonstration, making anthrax the first disease in which the etiological relation of a germ to a disease was proved.

In 1877 the bacillus of malignant edema was discovered by Pasteur; in 1879 the germ of chicken cholera by Pasteur, and the gonococcus by Neisser. In 1880 the pneumococcus was discovered by Pasteur and by Sternberg independently, and the typhoid bacillus by Eberth.

Of even greater significance, perhaps, was the announcement in this year by Pasteur of a bacterial vaccine against chicken cholera, followed in 1881 by his epoch-making demonstration of vaccination against anthrax. This year brought also the discoveries of the pus-forming organisms, the staphylococcus and streptococcus, knowledge of which has revolutionized modern surgery and robbed maternity of its chief dangers. The year 1882 will always be notable for the discovery of the tubercle bacillus by Koch. Loeffler and Schutz isolated the germ of glanders in this year also. The year 1883 saw the discovery of the spirillum of Asiatic cholera by Koch, and the bacillus of diphtheria by Klebs, while 1884 was marked by two discoveries of great public-health significance—the isolation of the diphtheria bacillus by Loeffler, and of the typhoid bacillus by Gaffky.

The influence of the new science on public-health ideas and practice was paramount. In the pages of our *Transactions* one may find a veritable history of bacteriology, with its practical application to public health, and while the earlier discoveries came largely from abroad, our Association was not without representatives, notably in the person of Dr. George M. Sternberg, our president in 1886.

The Association from its inception has taken a broad view of its duties to the public, and has established an enviable record for public service. At the third Annual Meeting, held in Philadelphia, the following resolution was adopted:

> That a committee consisting of a member of this Association from each state and territory of the Union . . . . be appointed to petition Congress, at its next session, to institute a bureau of health, to be located at Washington City, with a branch at the seat of each state and territorial government.
>
> That this Association urge upon the governor and legislature of each and every state in the Union the importance of enacting laws creating state boards of health and providing adequately for sanitary administration.

Five years later, in 1879, under the impending danger of a yellow fever epidemic, Congress created a National Board of Health,* which functioned for the term of four years provided for in the act creating it, but was allowed to pass out of existence by the next Congress, in spite of petitions showing the need of such a body, the excellent results achieved during its short life, and the importance of its continuance.

We have been more successful with the states, and there is now no state in the Union without some form of a health department.

MEMBERSHIP

With the growth of the Association, it became increasingly evident that its objects could be best attained by consultation and coöperation with our neighbors, whose problems were much the same as

*A review of the "Operations of the National Board of Health" is given in Volume VIII, page 71, of our Transactions, by Dr. J. L. Cabell, President.

our own, so at the St. Louis meeting, in 1884, Canada was invited to join with us, and became a constituent member—without question the most important measure taken since the formation of the Association.

At the Brooklyn meeting, in 1889, the secretary was instructed to communicate with the health authorities of Mexico, Central America, Cuba and Colombia, and invite these countries to coöperate in the work of the Association. Mexico alone responded, accepting the invitation, and at the Charleston meeting, in 1890, we had the honor of entertaining Dr. Domingo Orvañanos and Professor Josè L. Gomez as the official representatives of the Superior Board of Health of Mexico. In 1892, at the meeting in the City of Mexico, the amendment to the Constitution proposed in 1891 was adopted, and Mexico came into the Association fully. These two sister countries have added greatly to our strength, and have given many of our distinguished members and officers.

In 1902, at New Orleans, the newly formed Republic of Cuba was invited to associate with us, and for the first time practically the whole of North America was embraced in our membership, making us in fact, as in name, the American Public Health Association.

SECTIONS

The influence of bacteriology and the growing importance of laboratory work have been already referred to. Discoveries were announced in rapid succession. Laboratories rapidly became essential to health officers and boards of health for diagnostic purposes and the control of such utilities as water supplies.

Although the epidemic of cholera in London traced to the "Broad Street Pump" occurred as early as 1854, the typhoid outbreak at Lausen, Switzerland, in 1872,. was the first to attract widespread attention to the danger of polluted water. Other outbreaks, such as those at Caterham and Red Hill, England, in 1879, at Plymouth, Pennsylvania, in 1885, and at Lowell and Lawrence, Massachusetts, in 1890-91, had turned attention to the study of water supplies. The notable experiments in water purification instituted by the State Board of Health at Lawrence, Massachusetts, were designed and carried out largely by members of our Association, under the administration of our former president, Dr. Walcott. Many papers and discussions became too technical for the general meetings.

At the Montreal meeting, in 1894, Dr. Wyatt Johnston called attention to the desirability of having more uniform methods for the conduct of laboratory work. The result was that a sub-committee of the Committee on Pollution of Water Supplies issued a call for a convention of American bacteriologists, which met in New York in June, 1895. A committee was appointed to draw up procedures for the uniform study of bacteria and the differentiation of species. This committee reported at Philadelphia, in 1897, and the report was published in 1898—the first of the various "Standard Methods" now published by the Association.

A further result of this convention was the appointment of a Committee on Laboratory Work and Methods, at the Ottawa meeting in 1898, with Dr. Wyatt Johnston as chairman. In 1899, at the Minneapolis meeting, this committee reported and was discharged, its functions being taken over by the Section on Bacteriology and Chemistry organized at this time. Nearly one hundred enrolled in the new section at once, of whom approximately half were new members of the Association.

The section has always devoted much attention to the standardization and improvement of laboratory methods, and its publications are regarded as official throughout the countries of North America.

The scope of public health was rapidly widening during these years, and the

growth of the Association kept pace with it. New members with new points of view were constantly joining our ranks, and specialism was inevitable. In 1908 two new sections were organized, Vital Statistics and Public Health Administration. Three years later it became necessary to further specialize, and again, in 1911, two new sections were organized, Sociological and Sanitary Engineering. In 1914 the Section on Industrial Hygiene was formed, and that on Food and Drugs in 1917. If time and space permitted it would be most interesting to review the genesis of all the sections. They were preceded by special committees and reports, which gave evidence of the growth of the public-health idea, as well as the sense of duty to the public which has always actuated our Association. All sections were formed in response to demands which could not be put aside. At present there are requests before us for the formation of still other sections, most of which have a basis of valid claims on our attention, and with the further growth of the Association we must soon expect to see the number of sections increased.

PUBLICATIONS

Until 1895 the proceedings of the Association, together with the reports and papers presented at the meetings, were published as an annual volume under the title *Public Health, Reports and Papers of the American Public Health Association.* From 1895 to 1898, inclusive, they were published as a quarterly, entitled, *Journal of the American Public Health Association,* the original title and serial number being retained for the annual volume. In 1899 the annual volume was returned to, and continued until 1908, except that for three volumes, two in 1905, and one in 1906, the papers of the Laboratory Section were published by the *Journal of Infectious Diseases,* and bound as Part II of Volumes XXX, XXXI, and XXXII; and for one volume, 1907, these papers were printed by the *American Journal of Public Hygiene,* and bound as Part II of Volume XXXIII. In 1908, beginning with Volume XXXIV, our papers were published by the *American Journal of Public Hygiene,* which became the official organ of the Association, and this was continued until the establishment, in 1911, of our own periodical, the JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION.

There are 37 volumes of our transactions, reports and papers under the original title. Of these, Volumes XXXIV and XXXV are reprinted from the *American Journal of Public Hygiene,* and XXXVI and XXXVII from the JOURNAL of our Association, which continued the *American Journal of Public Hygiene.* During the first twenty-five years of our existence we published twenty-two volumes, containing 695 papers and 9,117 pages of reading matter. From 1897 to 1911, when the JOURNAL was begun, 13 volumes were issued, containing 827 papers and 6,826 pages. The ten volumes of the JOURNAL completed to date, 1911 to 1920, contain 1,106 articles, 136 reports, 229 editorials, and 11,379 pages, making a total of 2,993 articles and 27,322 pages of literature on health, in which every phase of the subject has been discussed by specialists and experts. These pages are not only a mine of information, but also a good history of the public-health movement during the past fifty years. The reports of committees and papers read leave no matter of interest untouched. Our general meetings have been the forum before which many epoch-making discoveries have been presented or discussed. The volumes are in demand for libraries, and it is now very difficult to obtain full sets. A review of them would be most interesting and proper in this address, but the several fifty-year histories on public-health topics which are to be presented at this meeting and published in our Jubilee Volume will doubtless cover much of the same ground, so that only a few points will be noted here.

As it were a beacon to guide the young Association, the first volume contains a paper by F. A. P. Bernard, LL.D., president of Columbia College, New York City, on "The Germ Theory of Disease and Its Relation to Hygiene," giving an excellent presentation of the new discoveries and ideas concerning disease. Although written by a non-medical man, it was in advance of much of the medical opinion of the day, since it was followed by papers on "Sewer Gas as a Cause of Scarlet Fever and Typho-Malarial Diseases"; "Does Smallpox Become Epidemic, or Spread Only by Its Own Contagion?"; "Gases of Decay and the Harm They Cause in Dwellings," and others of the same type, especially concerning yellow fever.

In comparing the earlier volumes with those of to-day, one is struck by the fact that the most important topics discussed in the early years are scarcely ever mentioned now. The first volume, published in 1873, is given up largely to yellow fever and cholera. One finds it hard to believe that cholera was at that time widespread in the United States, and that it existed in more than two hundred towns and cities of the Mississippi Valley.

Year after year we find pages devoted to the discussion of yellow fever, with many diverse theories as to its origin and propagation, such, for instance, as that it originated *de novo* in the cities of America; that the cause was cumulative and due to uncleaned privy vaults; that it arose from bilge-water; that the body does not reproduce the poison of yellow fever; and that the poison may be developed by adding one or more of the excretions of the patient to decomposing organic matter under well-known conditions.

These discussions were set at rest for all time in a paper read at our Indianapolis meeting in 1900, by Dr. Walter Reed, entitled, "The Etiology of Yellow Fever: A Preliminary Note." We feel a justifiable pride in knowing that the discoveries therein detailed were the result of studies made by one of our former presidents, Dr. Carlos J. Finlay, and our honored fellow-member, Dr. Walter Reed, who, with Doctors Lazear, Carroll, and Agramonte, gave the final proofs. It is impossible to praise too highly the scientific acumen displayed, or the devotion to duty which led these men to place their lives in jeopardy by experimenting on themselves, one, Dr. Jesse W. Lazear, making the supreme sacrifice as a result.

Only those of Southern birth or Southern residence can fully appreciate what this discovery has meant. In his presidential address on our twenty-fifth anniversary, Dr. H. B. Horlbeck urged that the President of the United States be requested to send a commission of expert bacteriologists to Havana and Rio to study yellow fever. Three years later the method of transmission was proved, and the disease was rapidly brought under control. The causative germ for years eluded discovery, but apparently has recently been cultivated by Dr. Hideyo Noguchi. Yellow fever was first brought into the United States in 1693, and for more than two hundred years was the terror of the South. Our pages show what the disease has meant to our country, and an especially graphic portrayal may be found in a speech by Dr. Joseph Holt, president of the Louisiana Board of Health in 1886. We can at this time scarcely understand the justification of the "shot-gun quarantine" which yellow fever outbreaks brought into being. That human nature does not change very rapidly is shown by the action of the authorities of Aberdeen in 1585, who erected gibbets,—

> One at the nearest cross, one other at the Brig of Dee, and the third at Haven Mouth, that in case any infectit person might arrive or repair by sea or land to this brough, or in case any indweller of this brough receive, house or harbor, or give meat or drink to the infectit person or persons, the man to be hangit, and the woman to be drownit.

The meeting at Buffalo, in 1896, was made notable by the paper of Dr. Wyatt

Johnston of Montreal, "On the Application of the Serum Diagnosis of Typhoid Fever to the Requirements of Public Health Laboratories." He demonstrated there for the first time the feasibility of sending blood dried on paper long distances through the mails, and making correct diagnoses in cases of suspected typhoid fever, a practice now common in every public-health laboratory.

I cannot but pause here a moment to pay tribute to Dr. Johnston in recognition of his services to the Association and to the cause of public health. His early death took from us one of our most useful and brilliant members, and cut short a scientific career already notable and full of promise.

Lomb Prize Essays

In 1884, Mr. Henry Lomb, of Rochester, New York, set an example which we wish might have been followed by others, by offering $2,000 to be awarded as prizes for essays on subjects selected by himself.

The contest attracted wide attention, and more than fifty essays were sent in, coming from foreign countries as well as America.

The awards were made at the Washington meeting, in 1885, as follows:

1. Healthy Homes and Food for the Working Classes, by Victor C. Vaughan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

2. The Sanitary Conditions and Necessities of School-Houses and School-Life, by D. F. Lincoln, Boston, Massachusetts.

3. Disinfection and Individual Prophylaxis against Infectious Diseases, by George M. Sternberg, Washington, D. C.

4. Preventable Causes of Disease, Injury and Death in American Manufactories and Work-Shops, and the Best Means and Appliances for Preventing and Avoiding Them, by George H. Ireland, Springfield, Mass.

These *Essays* were published as a separate volume and went through three editions. The essay of Dr. Sternberg was revised and enlarged, and published in our *Transactions,* Volume XXV, 1889. For many years it was the leading work on disinfection in the English language.

In recognition of his services, Mr. Lomb was made a life member of the Association.

Journal

For many years the need of a medium for frequent communication between workers in the field of public health had been felt. Neither the annual volume, the quarterly publication, nor the affiliation with the *American Journal of Public Hygiene* had satisfactorily filled this need, which was becoming increasingly urgent as the field of health work enlarged and the number of workers increased. At the Milwaukee meeting, in 1910, a resolution was adopted creating a Committee on Journal, authorizing and directing this committee to provide for the publication of a monthly journal. The first number was issued in January, 1911, under the title JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION. In 1912 the name was changed to AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH which it still retains.* From the beginning it has taken a leading position among scientific journals, and the premier place among those devoted to health. Its value to the Association cannot be estimated, keeping our members in touch with the organization during

*In 1891 a quarterly was established, entitled, *Journal of the Massachusetts Association of Boards of Health,* the first number of which appeared in January of that year, published by W. S. French, Newton, Massachusetts, who was probably also the editor. It was the official organ of the organization from which it took its name. Dr. Samuel H. Durgin, president of the A. P. H. A. in 1902, became editor in 1903. The next year Dr. H. W. Hill became managing editor, and under the direction of Doctors Durgin and Hill the *Journal* grew and extended its usefulness. In 1904, Volume XIV, No. 4, it became the *American Journal of Public Hygiene,* still retaining its function as the official organ of the Massachusetts Association of Boards of Health. In 1907 it became the official organ of the Laboratory Section of the A. P. H. A., and in 1908 of the Association, including the new sections on Municipal Health Officers and Vital Statistics. In 1911 the new JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION continued as the AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH.

I am indebted to Dr. Victor H. Bassett, of Savannah, Ga., for much of this record.

the intervals between the annual meetings, and giving them during the year information of the new and important developments in public health. Since its foundation it has replaced the annual volume for the publication of reports and papers.

Since March, 1919, a monthly *News Letter* has been issued. To date 112,774 copies have been distributed.

Standard Methods

The Association has from its inception striven for the adoption of uniform practices and standard methods. It has for many years had various committees at work, constantly trying out methods and selecting the best. As a result, we have published the following:

"Standard Methods for the Examination of Water and Sewage." The predecessor, and really the first edition of this publication, was the report of the committee appointed in 1895 to draw up procedures for the uniform study of bacteria, adopted at the Philadelphia meeting in 1897, and published in Volume XXIII, 1898, of our *Transactions*. In 1899 a committee was appointed with the view of extending the standard procedures to include not only determination of species of bacteria, but all other lines of investigation involved in the analysis of water. Progress reports were made in 1900, 1901, and 1902, two of which were published in our *Transactions* and one in *Science*. The final report was published in 1905, as Part II, Volume XXX, of our *Transactions*. Revision has been constant, and other editions have appeared in 1912, 1917, and 1920. The fourth edition was revised by committees of the American Public Health Association, American Chemical Society, and referees of the Association of Official Agricultural Chemists.

"Standard Methods for the Bacteriological Examination of Milk," first edition, 1910; second, 1916; third, 1920. The third edition was revised in conjunction with committees from the American Dairy Science Association, International Association of Dairy and Milk Inspectors, and members of committees from the Society of American Bacteriologists and American Association of Medical Milk Commissions.

"Standard Methods for the Examination of Air," first report, 1909; second, 1912; third, 1916.

"Pasteurization of Milk," 1920. Report of Committee on Milk Supply of the Sanitary Engineering Section.

"Model Health Code for Cities," 1921. Report of Committee on Model Health Legislation.

"Standardization of Public Health Training," 1921. Report of the Committee of Sixteen.

"An Index for Public Health Literature."

"Health Quotations."

THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

Our Association is at a critical stage of its existence. As a necessary part of our growth, we have assumed many obligations, while others have been thrust upon us. We have outgrown the period when one of our members could manage our affairs from his own home or office. We have taken our place along with other great national societies, with a whole-time secretary, who is also editor of our JOURNAL, an associate editor, and an office staff. The demands upon us are constantly increasing, as a result of our growth and extending influence. It is a sign of health on which we must congratulate ourselves. Nevertheless, a greatly increased income is required to keep pace with our responsibilities.

The high cost of living has been keenly felt by us directly and indirectly. The cost of publication of our JOURNAL and *News Letter* has doubled. Salaries have of necessity been increased, though still below what they should be. In May of this year we moved our offices to New York, joining with some dozen other national organizations in leasing space in the Penn Terminal Building. Although

the move increased our expenses considerably, we believe that the close association with other societies has advantages which will prove more than compensatory. New York is our great center of life and human interests, a city visited by many thousands throughout the year, and it is our hope that new interest will be aroused in our members by having our headquarters easily accessible to visitors from all parts of the country.

The urgent need of the Association is a greatly increased income. The most obvious method of obtaining this is by enlarging our membership, though it must be pointed out that for several years past the membership dues have added but little to our net income, since almost the entire amount is spent in service to the members. Drives for new members have in the past been successful, and our membership has increased in a most gratifying manner. The business depression of the past year has prevented us from making any extended effort to gain members, and has caused many resignations. Specialism in public health, which is much in evidence, is also a menace to our membership, since new societies are constantly being formed having for their object the consideration of some special branch of preventive medicine now represented by a section of our Association. "The platform of the Association is, in length, breadth, and thickness, sufficient to accommodate all who are interested in human conservation." (Rankin.)

Health is not the monopoly of any group or class. It is the common heritage, and should be the common property of all, and one of the objects most dear to the heart of our Association is to give to everyone the store of knowledge we now possess. It is true to-day, as in the time of Hosea, that "people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." For some years we have been trying to finance a popular health journal, written in non-technical language, which would present to the public in attractive form and style those facts of life and good living which should be known to all. We have not yet succeeded, nor have we been able to interest any philanthropist in the plan. Perhaps the very broadness of our platform is an inherent weakness. It is generally easy to obtain money for the relief of suffering but hard to get it for the prevention of that same suffering. Some other societies which concentrate their efforts on the prevention of a single disease have been more fortunate in enlisting the interest of wealthy persons.

When Mr. Lomb gave the money for his *Prize Essays,* he said: "I see what you want. You have an abundance of light, but your light must be hidden under a bushel because you have no means to disseminate it. I propose to assist you, if it is acceptable." We continue to hope that some far-sighted philanthropist may be brought to appreciate the opportunities offered in this field, which has up to the present remained fallow. Thus financed we are confident that the JOURNAL would soon become not only self-supporting, but a handsome source of revenue, furnishing much needed funds for the extension of our activities.

We were born at an opportune moment, and have lived in a period which for all time will be remarkable for its scientific achievement. "For countless generations the prophets and kings of humanity have desired to see the things which men have seen, and to hear things which men have heard, in the course of this wonderful nineteenth century. . . . In the fullness of time, long expected, long delayed, at last science emptied upon him, from the horn of Amalthea blessings which cannot be enumerated, blessings which have made the century forever memorable; and which have followed each other with a rapidity so bewildering that we know not what next to expect." (Osler.) It is good to have lived in such a period, but it is better to have taken an active part in the events which have made that period notable, and this we can with confidence claim, especially as regards the biological sciences,

the unravelling of whose mysteries has meant so much to human welfare and happiness.

The Association has had a glorious past of service to the countries represented in its membership, and to mankind. In 1890, with less than 550 members, it was rated as "the largest and most influential organization in the world in shaping public-health opinions." That we have maintained this position, I am confident. The five thousand who now share the privilege of membership are the trustees of the future. We owe a debt to those who have wrought and passed on, which can best be paid by maintaining the standards set by them and by following their example of unselfish devotion to the welfare of our beloved Association.

We cannot, if we would, stand still and point to our past achievements *Noblesse oblige*. Our path leads forward, and the difficulties which confront us at this time must serve to stimulate our efforts to even greater accomplishment for the future.

The needs of the Association* were clearly and forcibly set forth by President Rankin last year. He showed the possibilities of a popular health magazine, and urged a change of attitude to the public. "The time is at hand," he said, "when the public are no longer to be thought of as beneficiaries in the public-health movement, but are to be trusted as participants." I can do no better than endorse these words, and urge that the Directors take active steps looking to the enlargement of our membership according to the general plan outlined, the chief features of which are a national parent organization, with state and county societies in close affiliation, all bound together by a common object—the conservation of human life—and kept in constant touch with each other through the medium of a great public-health magazine. So may we prove ourselves worthy of our trusteeship, and erect to those who builded our Association and passed it into our hands a memorial worthy of their high aspirations.

In bringing this address to a close, it would be a grateful task to tell something of the history of those who have contributed conspicuously to the success of the Association. It has seemed possible, however, to do this only in the case of a number of our former presidents, and, with the single exception of Dr. Stephen Smith, our first president, the biographical sketches must be confined to those who are no longer with us.

If it should be felt by any that invidious distinctions have been made in speaking of some when all could not be included, I beg to remind such

> "that in science, at least, great names are landmarks; and the owners of these names have traversed and gleaned in fields where many a devoted laborer has delved and sown, and pathetically sweated blood in his altruistic zeal. In science, at least, no man works in vain. Full many a one, worthy of an elegy, has given his whole life to establishing a fact or indeed only an item to a fact; his work unrealized, ridicule and even persecution ofttimes his only compensation, throughout perhaps in the meanest destitution, yet his life and his work have been absolutely essential to the building of a mighty fabric." (Huber).

The study of the lives of our past presidents has been an inspiration, but has brought home to me a keen sense of my unworthiness to succeed them and of my inability to fill the office once held by them. Dear to me as is the honor of presiding at this fiftieth anniversary meeting, I have many times wished that this tribute might have been written by a more facile pen, and one capable of paying adequate homage to their lives and accomplishments. Whatever may be lacking in expression I trust is made up for by the love and reverence which have prompted my hand.

It is rare for a society to be fortunate enough to have present at the celebration of its fiftieth birthday its first president. Such is our good fortune. We have at this meeting the man we delight to honor

*AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH, April, 1920, p. 297.

above all others, the man to whom, more than to any other, we owe our existence, our founder and first president, who charted our course and stood at the wheel during the early years of our voyage, who stands today an example of all that our Association holds most dear, a man pre-eminent both as a citizen and a sanitarian, Dr. Stephen Smith.†

†The remainder of the presidential address, which is devoted to biographical sketches of Dr. Smith and of the presidents of the A. P. H. A. who are now deceased, cannot be included in the JOURNAL, but is printed in full in the Jubilee Volume, *A Half Century of Public Health*, Mazyck P. Ravenel, M.D., editor.

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WATCH FOR THE REPORTS OF THE SEMICENTENNIAL MEETING

The December issue of the JOURNAL has been arranged primarily with the object of bringing to the members in printed form as many as possible of the more important and timely papers and committee reports presented at the Fiftieth Annual Meeting in New York City last month.

For economy of space, only those historical papers presented at the general sessions are published in the JOURNAL which are not printed elsewhere. With the exception of part of the presidential address, therefore, the reader is referred to the Jubilee Historical Volume for several of the half-century reviews in specific fields.

Abstracts of the business transactions of the Board of Directors and of the various sections will appear in the December issue of the News Letter, out December 28. Information of timely interest and a retrospect of the annual meeting will be published in this number.

In the January issue of the JOURNAL, to be published January 7, will be published another group of very important annual-meeting papers and reports, together with the resolutions adopted by the Association and certain of the sections.

Future issues of the News Letter will contain the revised list of Association committees, the new constitution of the A. P. H. A., the proposed model constitution for the sections, and other matters of primary interest to the members, while the JOURNAL will continue its policy of publishing the scientific papers of the annual meeting as rapidly and as impartially as possible.